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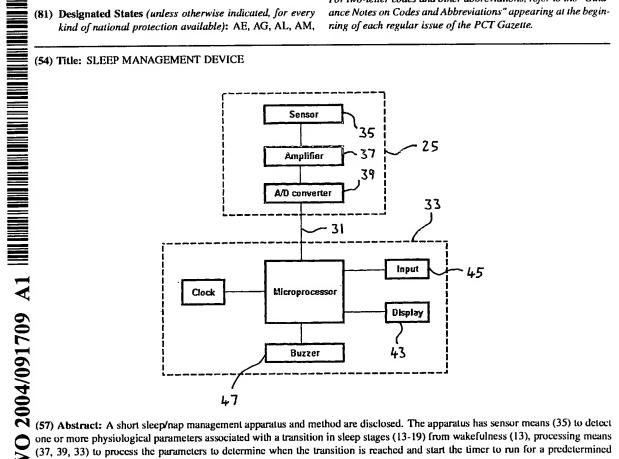
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one or more physiological parameters associated with a transition in sleep stages (13-19) from wakefulness (13), processing means (37, 39, 33) to process the parameters to determine when the transition is reached and start the timer to run for a predetermined period, and alarm means (47) to actuate at the end of said predetermined period to awaken the user.